



Operations Other Than War Lessons Learned



Operation Uphold Democracy Haiti 1993-1995

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background. *Operation Uphold Democracy* was a coordinated effort by the United States, the Organization of American States, and the U.N. to return President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to office in Haiti after he had been deposed by a military coup in September 1991. It took three years of failed diplomacy and internal U.S. political wrangling before a consensus supporting military action was formed. In late September 1994, facing imminent military invasion, the military junta in Haiti stepped down and U.S. forces entered Haiti. On 15 October 1994, President Aristide returned, and by January 1995, command of the operations were turned over to the U.N.

B. Key Results, Consequences, and Insights. As a whole, *Operation Uphold Democracy* was a success. It achieved the short term goals assigned, which were:

- To decapitate the military junta
- To restore the elected president
- To turn command of operations over to U. N. control in six months

Other than halting the mass exodus of Haitians to the U.S., the long term effects of intervention are negligible as of April 1999. The underlying conditions that caused the original problems remain: *i. e.* political instability; civil unrest; and economic collapse. Political instability is growing due to the inability to peacefully transfer political power after President Aristide's term. Civil unrest has grown to the point that General Charles Wilhelm, Commander in Chief, Southern Command, has called for the withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Haiti on the grounds that they are devoting more time to self protection than any mission. Moreover the Haitian economy remains a basket case, unable to attract urgently needed foreign aid and investment due to rampant corruption and growing instability.

C. Reference: These lessons learned are extracted from: *Interagency and Political-Military Dimensions of Peace Operations: Haiti – A Case Study*, edited by Margaret Daly Hayes and Gary F. Wheatly and published by the National Defense University, Institute for National Strategic Studies in February 1996

II. LESSONS LEARNED

A. Interagency Planning Doctrine. The U.S. Government needs to establish doctrine and procedures for civil and military planning for operations in which civilian and military participants are likely to be co-equal. With out a more formal interagency planning process, planning and execution of interagency missions will continue to be haphazard and incomplete.

- B. Planning must compensate for differences between military and civilian organizations.** Military organizations are far better organized to conduct mission planning. Civilian agencies normally do not have a cadre of experienced crisis response mission planners. The military has organic support services that accompany military forces while most civilian agencies contract out for support from non-government organizations (NGO's). Furthermore the contracts are not let until the mission is underway, often resulting in a delay in civilian services. Finally military and civilian agencies may not be fully aware of each other's capabilities and the need for interface.
- C. Surge Capabilities.** The military is able to surge effectively for both planning and operations. The lack of civilian surge capacity puts civilian agencies at a disadvantage in contingency planning and, in Haiti, delayed their ability to bring resources to bear in the initial days when the military expected them to arrive with resources in hand. Without a planning cadre and some surge capability within civilian agencies, efficient interagency planning and coordination will remain illusive.
- D. Security Requirements.** The need to protect military planning for forcible entry into Haiti seriously limited interagency cooperation. In those cases where the initial resistance is anticipated to be non-existent or minimal, the withholding of basic information from civilian agencies may actually increase the risk of casualties as a result of delays in getting civilian agencies and basic services stood up after the initial entry.
- E. Interagency Command and Control.** When U.S. Military forces arrived in Haiti, they were unaware of many of the civilian agencies already there or about to enter. The Ambassador was seriously distracted by events not directly related to the military mission and the embassy did not have the staff needed to handle the additional load. Ad-hoc coordination between the military commander and the Ambassador worked well enough; however, a special task force for inter-agency coordination should have been in place before the operation started.
- F. Operational Concepts of OOTW.** Recent operations in "failed states" suggest that the forces arriving first on the scene are likely to have to play significant roles in providing for basic services. The lack of surge capacity on the civilian side and the delays in mobilizing the contractor community indicate that the military will be called upon to assume responsibility for domestic security and basic services for a limited period of time.

III. "FOOT STOMPERS." This operation was a success for two basic reasons. First, the goals were limited and the objectives were achievable. Second, the U. S. Government decided to develop a formal interagency political-military plan in advance.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS. Interagency C² wargames can help work out interagency differences, familiarize them with each other's capabilities, and develop consensus on doctrine and procedures.